

Testimony in Support of SB284

Jocelyn Lillis
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Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Jocelyn Lillis, and I am from Hamden, CT. I am a Medical Case Manager for the Ryan White Program at Apex Community Care, which works with a diverse population of clients living with HIV.

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an essential step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

My clients are HIV positive, and many have come to this country for a better life and access to the American Dream. Nearly all of my undocumented clients could not access or afford the medication and care needed to reach undetectable status in their home countries. Undetectable means that people with HIV who achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load—the amount of HIV in the blood—by taking antiretroviral therapy daily as prescribed cannot sexually transmit the virus to others. As a Medical Case Manager, it is my job to help clients remove or overcome barriers that could inhibit their ability to remain consistently engaged in medical care and achieve undetectable status. My clients have

a myriad of issues to navigate when it comes to remaining undetectable: housing instability, discrimination, food insecurity, poverty, and a lack of social support. My clients are parents who always place their children's health and well-being above their own. Worrying about their children's health or the cost of affording care for their children does not have to be a barrier preventing them from achieving and maintaining undetectable status.

I want to thank the Human Services Committee for hearing my concerns. I support S.B. 284, and I ask the committee to help pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age because healthier communities benefit us all. Therefore, I urge the committee to support SB 284.

Thank you for your time,

Jocelyn Lillis